

Remarks

Claims 1-14 and 21-26 are pending in the application. Claims 1 and 14 are rejected, claims 2-7 are objected to, claims 8-13 are withdrawn from consideration, and claims 21-26 are allowed. By this paper, claims 1, 3-5 and 7 are amended, while claims 2 and 8-14 are cancelled. Based on the following, consideration of the amended claims, and reconsideration of the remaining rejected claim, are requested.

Claim Rejections—35 U.S.C. §§ 102, 103

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over, U.S. Patent No. 6,516,253 (Boggs et al.). By this paper, claim 14 is canceled, thereby rendering moot its rejection. Claim 1 is amended by this paper to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. Specifically, amended claim 1 includes all of the limitations of claim 2, which accordingly, has been canceled. The Examiner objected to claim 2, but indicated that it would be allowable if written in independent form to include all of the limitations of its base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 2 depended directly from claim 1, and, as noted above, has had all of its limitations incorporated into amended claim 1. Therefore, amended claim 1 is believed to be allowable. Claims 3-5 and 7 are amended by this paper to depend directly from amended claim 1, this change being necessitated by the cancellation of claim 2.

Amended claim 1 is the base claim for claims 3-7, each of which contains all of the limitations of amended claim 1, as well as additional limitations that further distinguish it from the cited reference. Therefore, claims 3-7 are also believed to be allowable.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner objected to claims 2-7 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that each would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of its respective base claim and any intervening claims. As discussed in detail above, claim 2 has been canceled and claims 3-7 are believed to be in allowable form. Applicants thank the Examiner for the allowance of claims 21-26, and submit that the present application is now in a condition for allowance.

The Petition fee of \$120.00 is being submitted herewith electronically. Please charge any additional fees or credit any overpayments as a result of the filing of this paper to our Deposit Account No. 02-3978.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: November 16, 2007

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